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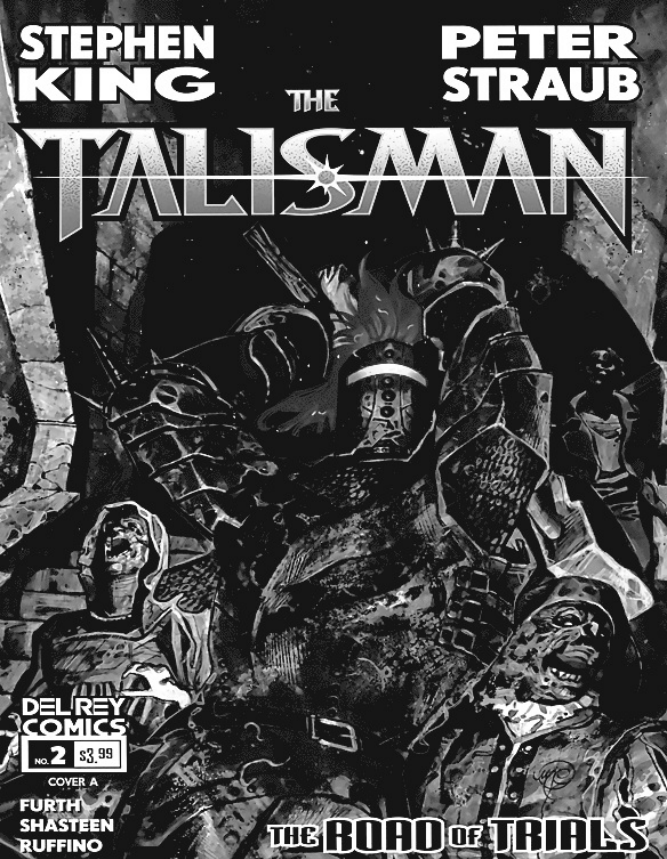
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**STEPHEN
KING**

**PETER
STRAUB**

THE

TALISMAN



**DEL REY
COMICS**

NO. 2 \$3.99

COVER A

**FURTH
SHASTEEN
RUFFINO**

THE ROAD OF TRIALS

THE TALISMAN

THE ROAD OF TRIALS

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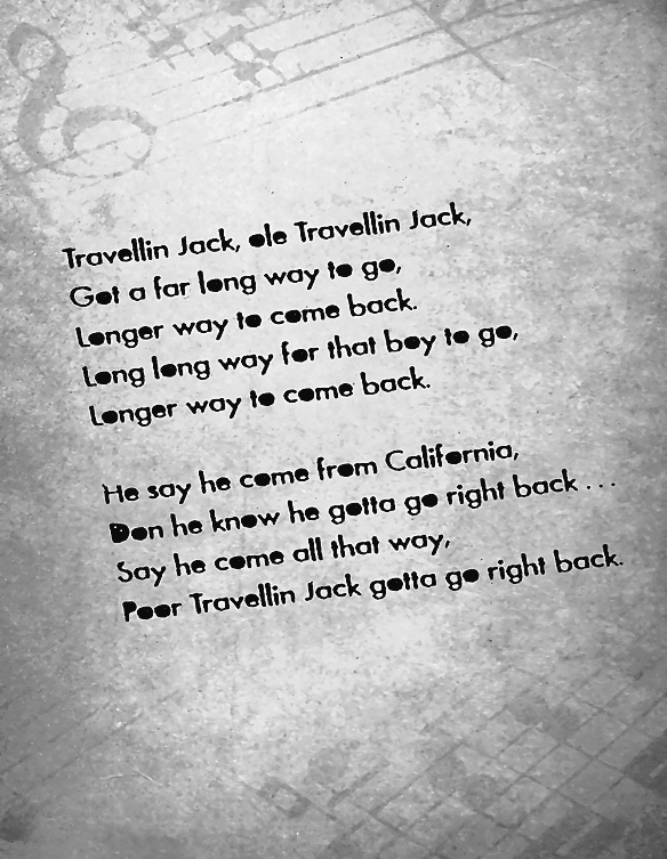
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From the minds of master storytellers
Stephen King and Peter Straub
comes a mesmerizing tale of the
quest for a prize so precious—and
so powerful—it could destroy two
entire worlds and every man, woman,
monster, and innocent who
travels between them.

Thirteen-year-old Jack Sawyer has personal reasons for pursuing the Talisman. His mother is dying—and the only way to save her is to journey into the realm they call the Territories to claim the prize before the forces of darkness, led by the cunning Morgan of Orris, can tap its awesome power. Jack has already lost his father and uncle to the machinations of Morgan's earthly "Twinners" and now, as he prepares to depart this world for another one a hundred times more perilous, plots are already afoot to deny him the object of his quest and exact a fearful vengeance on everything he holds dear.



Travellin Jack, ole Travellin Jack,
Got a far long way to go,
Longer way to come back.
Long long way for that boy to go,
Longer way to come back.

He say he come from California,
Don he know he gotta go right back ...
Say he come all that way,
Peer Travellin Jack gotta go right back.

Beverly Hills, California
September 15, 1981

Thayer School
Springfield, Illinois
September 15, 1981

DAD? MY LAST
THREE LETTERS TO
JACK HAVE BEEN
RETURNED.

THAT'S
BECAUSE THEY'VE
DONE ANOTHER RUNNER.
THE CANCER HAS TURNED
LILY'S BRAIN TO COTTAGE
CHEESE, AND SHE DOESN'T
WANT TO SIGN SAWYER
& SLOAT OVER
TO ME.

IS SHE
REALLY
DYING?

SHE HAS
LESS THAN A YEAR
TO LIVE. BUT DON'T
WORRY ABOUT YOUR
PAL JACK. I'LL TAKE
CARE OF HIM.

THANKS,
DAD.

LEAVE
EVERYTHING TO
YOUR OLD MAN,
RICHIE-BOY.

WHEN THIS IS
OVER, WE'LL GO
RAILROADING, LIKE
WE USED TO.

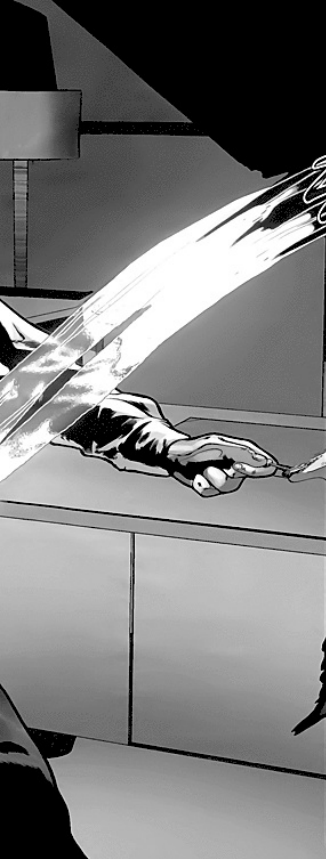
EVERYTHING
I DO IS FOR YOU,
RICHIE...





NOW IT'S
TIME TO BRING
THIS RIDICULOUS
BUSINESS TO A
CRASHING
HALT.

I'M
COMING FOR YOU,
JACKY!



BOTH OF
US ARE COMING
FOR YOU...
NOW!



SAY YOUR
GOOD-BYES?

YES.
WHERE AM
I GOING,
SPEEDY?

FROM
THIS HERE
ATLANTIC OCEAN
ACROSS TO THE
PACIFIC.

WHATT?
CAN'T I
FLY?

BOY, DON'T
LET *NUTHIN'*
GET YOU UP IN
THE SKY!

IF YOU
HAPPENED TO
FLIP OVER INTO THE
TERRITORIES WHILE
YOU WAS UP
THERE—



THAT'S
HORRIBLE!

THAT'S
WHY YOU
GONNA
WALK.

NOW OPEN
YOUR EYES AND SEE
WHAT I BROUGHT
YOU.



AIN'T NO
MAPS IN THE
TERRITORIES...

ROAD ATLAS

250



BUT IF YOU
STICK TO WHAT
YOU FIND IN HERE,
YOU'LL GET WHERE
YOU'RE GOIN'.

THANKS,
SPEEDY!



YOU GONNA
FIND A PLACE CALLED
THE BLACK HOTEL. IT'S
A SCARY, EVIL PLACE,
BUT YOU GOT
TO GO IN.

BUT
WHY?



BECAUSE
THE TALISMAN IS
A PRISONER
THERE.

THE
TALISMAN?

NOT TOO BIG,
NOT TOO SMALL, SHE
LOOK JUST LIKE A CRYSTAL BALL.
TRAVELLIN JACK, TRAVELLIN JACK, GOIN'
TO CALIFORNIA TO BRING HER BACK.
BUT HERE'S YOUR BURDEN, HERE'S
YOUR CROSS: DROP HER, JACK,
AND ALL BE LOST.



Near the Queen's
Summer Pavilion
The Territories

I'M
BACK!











GIVE ME
THE SIGN AND TELL
ME WHERE YOU
STOLE IT!

I DIDN'T
STEAL IT! SPEEDY
PARKER TOLD ME
TO SHOW IT TO
YOU!

PARKER?
DO YOU MEAN
PARKUS? TELL ME
WHAT HE LOOKS
LIKE!



HE'S AN
OLD BLACK MAN
WITH WHITE HAIR
AND PALE
EYES...

DO YOU
MEAN A BROWN
MAN? PARKUS
IS BROWN!



THAT
MEANS YOU'RE
FROM...THE OTHER
WORLD!





I CAN TAKE YOU TO THE QUEEN, BUT WE DON'T HAVE ANY TIME TO WASTE. YOU MUST PRETEND TO BE MY BASTARD SON. CAN YOU DO IT?

I... I THINK SO.



YOUR ACTING HAD BETTER BE GOOD. BOTH OUR LIVES DEPEND ON IT!



WHEN I TELL YOU TO SCRUB THE FLAGSTONES YOU WILL DO AS YOU ARE TOLD!

OW! YES, FATHER!



FATHER! YOU'RE HURTING ME!

NOT AS MUCH AS I'M GOING TO HURT YOU!



I PROMISE I'LL BE GOOD!



PLEASE, FATHER! YOU'RE HURTING ME!





MOTHER!

WHAT SHALL
HAPPEN TO US
WHEN OSMOND AND
THE OTHERS RUN
THIS CASTLE?

I KNOW
NOT, MY
LADY.







MORGAN
OF ORR/S, BOY.
AND HE IS NO ONE
TO FOOL WITH!

NOW COME!
WE MUST ACT OUR
PARTS AGAIN!



WAIT!
DID THE QUEEN HAVE
A SON?

YES. BUT
HE DIED NOT SIX
WEEKS OUT OF THE
WOMB. THERE WAS
TALK THAT ONE OF
MORGAN'S MEN
SMOTHERED
THE LAD...



WHAT'S
WRONG,
BOY?

I...I
ALMOST DIED
WHEN I WAS SIX
WEEKS OLD!

Hollywood Hills
California
1969















SIR
OSMOND!

CAPTAIN
FARREN, WHY DON'T
YOU INTRODUCE
ME TO YOUR...
AH...SON.



HIS NAME
IS LEWIS. HE IS
SIMPLE-MINDED
BUT LAZY...

ALL BOYS
ARE BAD. IT'S
AXIOMATIC!

BUT NO
ONE *KNEW* YOU
HAD A SON,
CAPTAIN...

I'VE
SEEN THIS GUY
BEFORE...

HIS
TWINNER TRIED
TO KIDNAP
ME!



WHO
ARE YOU?

TO BE CONTINUED

MONSTROUS MORGAN SLOAT

I think every *Talisman* fan will agree with me when I say that Morgan Sloat is an evil man. In fact, it is his twisted ambition and omnivorous greed that propel our story forward. Already we have seen Morgan Sloat and his equally vile Twinner, Morgan of Orris, slay Philip Sawyer and Prince Philip for refusing to import electricity to the Territories. We've witnessed the hit-and-run accident (arranged by Morgan, of course) that kills Lily and Jack's ally, Tom Woodbine, who had uncovered Morgan's unsavory business secrets. We've even discovered that Morgan Sloat tried to murder Jack when he was six weeks old. It is in large part because of Morgan that Jack sets off on his quest to find the *Talisman*. Of course Jack hopes—desperately—that the magical *Talisman* will cure his mother's cancer, but he also knows that the *Talisman* is his only weapon against Morgan's tyrannical ambition to control—and destroy—two worlds.

If Jack Sawyer is the hero of *The Talisman*, then Morgan Sloat is his nemesis. Yet while we are introduced to Jack on page 1 of Issue 1, we don't see much of Morgan's balding pate, or learn about his intrigues with his nasty Twinner, until the beginning of Issue 2. If Jack and Morgan are equally important to the unfolding of our tale, why don't we meet both of them in Issue 1? The most obvious answer would be that in the *Talisman* comics we've tried to follow the sequence of events as they unfold in the original novel. The book begins with Jack reflecting on the fact that he and his mother are on the run from his uncle Morgan, so that's how we kick off Issue 1 of our visual tale. But while it is certainly true that we wanted to begin Issue 1 with that great scene of Jack standing on a deserted

New Hampshire beach, as most of you have probably already noticed we haven't strictly adhered to the chronology of the book. Certain facts that remain hidden until quite late in the novel (for example, the identity of Prince Philip/Philip Sawyer's murderer and the occupants of the Wild Child van that runs down Tom Woodbine) are revealed early on in our visual tale.

**If Jack Sawyer is the
hero of *The Talisman*,
then Morgan Sloat
is his nemesis.**

Transforming a prose novel into a graphic novel is a complicated affair. Throughout the process, the writer, the editors, and the artist are faced with a series of decisions, each of which might seem small in itself, but which, when taken together, have a profound effect upon the reader. Just as a filmmaker has to select scenes from a novel and arrange them in an order that creates a coherent narrative that can be told within approximately ninety minutes, so a comic book writer has to endlessly condense and streamline events so that they fit in a series of comic books of approximately twenty-four pages each, each of which has a beginning, a middle, and a cliffhanger ending. In comics as in film, the trick is not to tell the original story in exactly the same way, but to focus on achieving *the same effect* as the original. Ultimately, I suppose, you could call this process an act of translation. After all, aren't we moving from the language of words to the language of pictures? And as every translator knows,

adages used in one language usually need to be reworked in order to have the same impact and meaning in another.

In the original *Talisman*, as in our adaptation, we learn a lot of information about Morgan before we actually meet him, and much of this information is unsavory. It's not that we discover that Morgan is thoroughly evil—that comes later. But we discover that he is pushy and greedy, and that he has been harassing Jack and his mother for months. Yet it is *how* this information is delivered that makes us suspect that Morgan may be a lot more dangerous than he seems. This layering of hints creates tremendous dramatic tension. We don't know for certain that Morgan is a monster, but we can almost read that thought in Jack's subconscious mind. Jack has never really trusted Morgan, so we don't either.

My first challenge in moving Morgan from words to images was to catch the sense of dread that readers feel every time Morgan's name is mentioned. Since graphic novels don't lend themselves very easily to extended internal monologues, and since innuendo has to be delivered through pictures rather than verbal clues, I had to rethink how I might foreshadow Morgan's arrival on the scene. What I decided to do was use our prequel—Issue 0—to tell the story that lies behind *The Talisman*'s narrative, a story that is conveyed over the course of the novel in fragmentary flashbacks, but which is central to the novel's dramatic momentum. That story is the death of Jack's father, Philip Sawyer.

In Issue 0, Philip Sawyer—who is merely a memory in the original novel—becomes a major player. We learn that Phil led a double life. He was simultaneously a Hollywood agent married to the B-movie queen Lily Cavanaugh and a traveler-between-worlds. Phil could disappear from our world, and though his body didn't reappear in another reality, his consciousness entered the body of

My first challenge in moving Morgan from words to images was to catch the sense of dread that readers feel every time Morgan's name is mentioned.

his Twiner, Prince Philip, consort of Laura DeLoessian, queen of the Territories. But in his frequent journeys between worlds, Phil Sawyer made one grave error. He introduced our world's Morgan Sloat to his Territories Twiner, Morgan of Orris, and the two became evil allies, ready to exploit their ability to *flip* between worlds for their own financial gain. Hence when Philip and Philip stood in the way of Morgan of Orris's desire to import electricity into the Territories (a scene extrapolated from a much later flashback where Morgan Sloat tells Philip Sawyer that he wants to begin exporting modern weaponry to the Territories), both Philips were murdered. However, since in the novel we don't *definitely* know that Morgan Sloat is evil until a little later in the narrative, I tried to leave a bit of doubt as to whether the two Morgans were allied in this act, or whether Morgan of Orris acted on his own.

Another change I made to the novel's chronology and action—once more in order to fulfill our prime directive of remaining true to the novel's spirit—was to show the death of Tom Woodbine, and the identities of his murderers, at the beginning of Issue 1. In our version of the tale, Tom is killed when he telephones Lily to warn her about Morgan, telling her to take Jack and run. Although we aren't told about this phone call in the book, I thought it was important to include it, since early on in the original Lily accuses Morgan of wanting to "take care" of her and Jack in the same way he took care of Tommy Woodbine.

The second great challenge I faced after I had layered the first part of the narrative with plenty of clues about Morgan Sloat's evil intentions was deciding when to introduce our villain. Should I end Issue 1 with a vision of Morgan, or should I place him in the novel's sequence of events, which would have landed him about halfway through Issue 2? Although, chronologically speaking, it would have made sense to place Morgan's big intro midway through Issue 2, every instinct in me screamed *No!* As a type A individual and a man with immense ambition, Morgan had to appear at the *beginning* of an issue. He had to enter with a bang! Because of this it seemed only natural to place Morgan at the beginning of Issue 2, where he could really grab our attention.

As a type A individual and a man with immense ambition, Morgan had to appear at the beginning of an issue. He had to enter with a bang!

In our version of the tale, as in the original, the first time we meet Morgan he is talking to his son, Richard, on the telephone. In this scene, I wanted to show another side of Morgan's complex character, namely his twisted love for his son, Richard. Although Morgan wants Jack to die, he wants Richard to thrive. And in Morgan's crazed mind, the two are intrinsically related. To show you how I tried to weave this subtext into the script, here's a section of the write-up that I handed to Tony:

PAGE 3

1. MORGAN SLOAT sits in his office at Sawyer & Sloat. His feet (shod in expensive Gucci loafers) rest on his expansive oak

desk. He wears a brown tailored double-breasted suit and a John Penke tie. The tie has been loosened. Near the sole of one foot is a large bottle of antacid. Absolutely **EVERYTHING** about this office should indicate **SUCCESS...**

Right now, Morgan is speaking to his son on the telephone. As he speaks, he runs the palm of his hand over his shiny bald pate. While the main panel really focuses on Morgan, in a small inset panel let's show his son, RICHARD SLOAT, who is on the other end of the line. Although Richard won't play a big part in our story until volume II, we could give him a face and body here, so that readers will know that—while Morgan Sloat is a monster—Richard Sloat is a good kid.

Richard should be standing at the communal telephone in the downstairs corridor of his dormitory. (Richard is boarding at the very exclusive Thayer School in Springfield, Illinois.) Richard is a mop-topped, skinny kid with thick glasses hooked firmly behind his ears. His fingers have ink stains on them, and he's wearing his school blazer and a firmly knotted tie. Beneath his school blazer he wears a patterned brown V-neck sweater, the bottom of which is tucked into the waistband of his trousers. Richard's dream is to become a chemist, so he should look very studious, sensible, and conscientious. Under his arm should be a thick book—either a chemistry textbook or *The Life of Thomas Edison*. Right now Richie is concerned about his best friend, Jack Sawyer. In fact, that is why he has called his father. Because of this, his expression should appear worried.

Since the school that Richard attends is very exclusive, and since we need to get that across in this illustration, can we make the place look a bit like a non-magical version of Hogwarts? (You know, like a U.S. version of Eton College.) That will definitely give the

place an exclusive feel. Rather than painting the corridor green, as it is in the book, shall we give it some heavy oak paneling, and put an arched gothic window nearby?

During the Middle Ages, when few men or women could read or write, the population was incredibly adept at interpreting pictures. In fact, the average individual in medieval times was probably more visually literate than we are today, even if she could not sign her name. To the medieval person, frescoes, stained glass, sculptures, and triptychs were full of secret stories. Any image of a skull reminded the viewer of the transitory nature of life. A woman holding a skull was most likely Mary Magdalene, symbolic of repentance. A fresco depicting a man holding a flayed skin and a tanner's knife was automatically recognized as St. Bartholomew, patron saint of bookbinders, leatherworkers, and butchers. Similarly, a depiction of a man seated at a table holding two chalices, or closing one door and opening another, was the anthropomorphic representation of the New Year.

Though today we can't necessarily read religious imagery in this way, we *do* still have an incredible ability to read images and to respond to the secret stories they tell. Since I could use very little dialogue in this introductory Morgan scene, it was this image-resonance that I hoped to tap into. As you can see in my notes to Tony, in the original novel, Richard's dormitory hallway (where he stands during his conversation with his father) is very plain and ugly. However, by transforming Richard's surroundings and making them

sumptuous, we show (without having to say it) that Morgan chooses the absolute best for his child. Yet while hinting at the love, or at least the need, that exists between these two characters, I also wanted to drop some clues as to the difference between Morgan and his much more trustworthy son.

Morgan—whose belly is always on fire—constantly pops antacids, bespeaking his fiery, aggressive, and acidic personality. His son, on the other hand, carries a large book, telling us that he has a much quieter and more studious nature. If you take another look at our comic book illustrations, you'll also see that Morgan and Richard have drastically different mannerisms. Like a classic villain, Morgan Sloat fondles his mustache, while his son, Richard, pushes up his glasses, a movement that draws our attention to his poor eyesight, which is metaphorical as well as literal. Poor Richard can't see *anything* very clearly, especially his father, even when his father openly lies to him. Finally, by ending with the short but poignant snatch of dialogue *Everything I do is for you, Richie*, I hoped to hint that there might be another side of Morgan Sloat, one that has been poisoned by his rage and ambition, but which was once, perhaps, more decent.

And so, my fellow *Talisman* fans, I will sign off until next month. I hope you have found this overview of monstrous Morgan enlightening, or at least intriguing. And remember, when you're alone in bed tonight, watch out for shadows. You never know what kinds of monsters lie in wait there!

All the best,
Robin Furth



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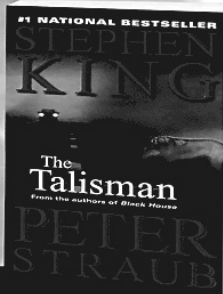


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But even as Travellin Jack makes his first foray behind the gates of the royal pavilion in search of his prize, danger lurks in the form of the sinister Osmond and the cruel, calculating Morgan of Orris, whose Earthly Twinner has already made one attempt on Jack's life—and who longs for a chance to finish the job.



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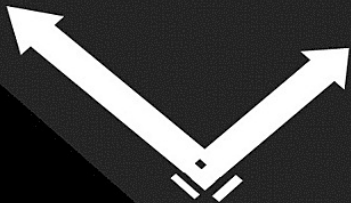
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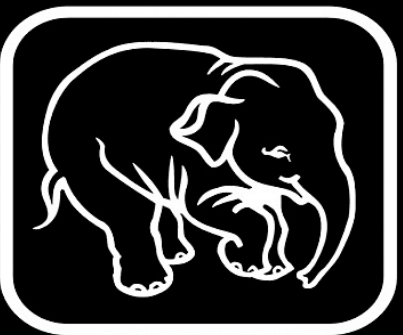
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